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DALLAS, TEXAS  
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**61-Year Old Man Sentenced to Nearly 20 Years  
in Federal Prison Following Drug Conviction**

***Defendant a Leader in Cocaine Distribution Conspiracy***

United States Attorney Richard B. Roper announced that Alfredo Rios Rivera was sentenced on Friday in Lubbock, Texas, by the Honorable Sam R. Cummings, United States District Judge, to almost 20 years (235 months) imprisonment, without parole, following his guilty plea in June to conspiracy to distribute cocaine and money laundering charges. Rivera, age 61, was a resident of Lubbock, Texas, when he was arrested in January 2004, but previously lived in Brownfield (Terry County), Texas. Rivera was also ordered to forfeit five vehicles, a computer, and a total of \$78,320.00 in currency, all seized by the government. He was also ordered to forfeit to the government the real property from where he ran his bar, "Mi Cantina Nightclub" located on Old Lamesa Road in Terry County, Texas.

At Friday's sentencing hearing, Judge Cummings found that Rivera was a leader in the cocaine distribution conspiracy and responsible for laundering more than \$200,000 but less than \$400,000. Rivera admitted that he and his co-conspirators, including his wife, Veronica Rivera, acquired various quantities of cocaine for distribution to other members of the drug trafficking conspiracy. Some of the conspirators would package, store, distribute and possess with intent to distribute the cocaine and proceeds from the sale of the drugs would be sent to other conspirators to purchase more drugs for further distribution.

Alfredo Rios Rivera admitted that he deposited a total of approximately \$220,636 in drug proceeds into four personal bank accounts and \$28,253 into four business bank accounts that he and his wife controlled. Rivera admitted that he conducted these transactions, and others designed to conceal and disguise the nature, location, source, ownership and control of the drug trafficking proceeds.

All co-defendants in the case have pled guilty to their involvement and all but one have been sentenced. Veronica Ann Rivera was sentenced to 57 months imprisonment; Joe Rodriguez Espinoza was sentenced to 41 months imprisonment; Steven Joe Salgado was sentenced to 46 months imprisonment; and Ramon Rios Rivera was sentenced to 16 months imprisonment. Defendant Raymundo Diaz Cruz is set to be sentenced on September 3, 2004.

U.S. Attorney Roper praised the investigative work conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Lubbock County Sheriff's Office, the Brownfield Police Department, the Terry County Sheriff's Office, the Llano Estacado Drug Task Force, and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tanya Pierce of the United States Attorney's Office in Lubbock, Texas.